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NOVEMBER 16, 2016

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A Chicago Tribune  
publication

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Four concerts to see this week **12**



**BEHIND**

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**THE MIC**

**PAGES 8-9**



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## 3-DAY FORECAST



**WEDNESDAY**

**58/48**

Pretty good



**THURSDAY**

**69/58**

Gorgeous



**FRIDAY**

**64/36**

Gloomy

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# MUTE

**TWITTER ADDS STRONGER TOOLS FOR  
BLOCKING, REPORTING ABUSIVE POSTS**

**By Hayley Tsukayama** | THE WASHINGTON POST  
Twitter took another step Tuesday in its long fight against trolls, announcing that it will give users a mute feature to weed out harassing words and phrases from their notifications.

The company plans to roll out the feature more broadly over time, Del Harvey, Twitter's vice president of trust and safety, said in an interview with The Washington Post. Adding it to notifications was a priority based on feedback from Twitter users.

"We've heard from users that this [notifications] is an area where people don't feel as though they have as much control on Twitter," Harvey said. "You're not searching for this content, but it's still something that's coming in to your Twitter experience."

With the new feature, Twitter users will be able to compile their own list of words, phrases and emojis that they don't want to see pop up in their notifications from the network.

Twitter's move comes after an election cycle that saw, among other incidents, a prominent

anti-Semitic movement on the network—it has been repeatedly criticized for not moving quickly enough to combat harassment on its site.

Harvey, who has been at Twitter for eight years, said she knows that some users are frustrated with the pace at which it's addressing harassment issues. "We haven't always moved as quickly as we would like or done as much as we would like," she said, adding that the company is trying to make sure that it has tools to shut down harassment on the site without crossing the line into limiting speech. "We have tried to be thoughtful, to make sure we don't have unintended and negative consequences," Harvey said.

Twitter has struggled for years with striking the right balance between protecting open expression on the network and protecting victims of harassment, often fielding heavy criticism for erring too far on the side of free speech. Harvey acknowledged that there were plenty of prime examples of Twitter's short-

comings when it came to policing harassment on the network during this year's election.

The addition of the mute feature wasn't driven by the dialogue around the election itself, Harvey said, but it did underscore for Twitter how much further it still has to go. Harvey said that Twitter has also made some changes to the way that users can report harassment on the site to better reflect its policies.

Last year, Twitter explicitly banned "hateful conduct," prohibiting the promotion of violence and direct attacks or threats to others on the basis of race, ethnicity and a number of other attributes. The social network has now updated the language it uses in its harassment reporting tool to reflect that policy and inform users that they can report others for that kind of behavior. Twitter has also made it easier for bystanders to report abuse—so person B can report that person C is harassing person A.

Finally, Harvey said, Twitter is continually training its staff across the globe to recognize

more forms of abuse. Twitter staff members review each report of abuse to determine whether it violates the company's policies. It's common to see Twitter users posting incredulous screenshots of notices from Twitter's abuse team rejecting abuse reports, even when they clearly violate Twitter's rules.

Those oversights are upsetting, she acknowledged, and often happen because a reviewer doesn't have the cultural context to understand why something may be offensive or abusive. Something that's obviously offensive to an American may not be so obvious to a person born in India, and vice versa, she explained.

So, in addition to an ongoing training course on how to recognize abusive behavior, Harvey said, Twitter has put together a training program on the historical and cultural context around particular types of harassment—types of anti-Semitism, for example. She said Twitter will also focus more closely on keeping its staff up to date with the evolving language of hate on its network.

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## Why some Chicagoans are ditching meals for Soylent

By Meg Graham | BLUE SKY INNOVATION

Chicago developer Zach Schneider used to drop a 5-hour Energy into an Arnold Palmer when he needed to be productive.

Now, he cracks open a bottle of Soylent, a 400-calorie meal replacement beverage that has drawn broad interest for its CEO's food-forgoing ways and its science fiction-inspired name—and a recent product recall.

The thick, off-white drink has gained a cult following with drinkers who want to worry more about work and less about where they'll pick up lunch.

“You have those days, especially Mondays, where you're just trying to catch up after a long weekend,” Schneider said. “I'll realize it's 1 [p.m.] and ... I haven't had lunch yet and I have a meeting in 15 minutes.”

Schneider drinks a bottle once or twice a week. But though it can keep his hunger at bay for a few hours, he says it's far from a gourmet experience.

“Have you ever had something that tastes like nothing? Like your great-grandma's potato salad?” he asks. “Just bland. There's no flavor. But it's not supposed to.”

Los Angeles-based Soylent's founder and CEO, Rob Rhinehart, created the product to replace the frozen corn dogs and ramen he survived on while bootstrapping a technology company. Rhinehart has said he drinks the product for most of his meals. Its nutrition label reads: “While not intended to replace every meal, Soylent can replace any meal.”

Today, Soylent, and other meal-replacement drinks like it, have become synonymous with efficiency and the round-the-clock hustle of entrepreneurship. Some Chicagoans are jumping aboard.

For Emilia Schobeiri, a Chicago-based wedding photographer, a caffeinated Soylent product called Coffiest lets her forgo most breakfasts. She and her husband have a subscription

for cases of Coffiest, and they buy Soylent also. Subscribers pay \$32.30 monthly for a case of 12 Soylent Drink bottles, and \$37.05 for 12 bottles of Coffiest—putting the price of the 400-calorie meals around \$3 each.

“We both travel a lot, and produce tends to go bad in our fridge. We kind of buy the bare minimum for groceries and end up eating out a lot—which adds up quickly and often isn't efficient timewise,” Schobeiri said. “Coffiest is my jam. I have that for breakfast almost every single day.”

On busy days, she said the drink lets her solve the hunger problem quickly without having to worry about finding something healthy to eat. But she doesn't envision a food-free future for herself.

Soylent recently recalled a meal replacement bar that made some customers sick, and stopped selling a powder mix. The company is blaming the problem on algal flour.

Drew Smith, a product manager at Moody Radio, drinks the bottled Soylent Drink and Coffiest. During big conferences or events, he said he often doesn't have time to forage for real food.

Smith said he wasn't too bothered by the recall. Like others, he appreciates the branding and the “open source” nature of the company's products.

“They're functioning like a software company, but with food. The culture that they're in ... they're immediately going to recall and then try to figure out what's going on,” he said.

Other meal-replacement products like SlimFast and Ensure aim to help consumers lose weight or add calories and nutrients.

“I know that there are other products like Soylent, or might even be more nutritious. I will very honestly say I just like the brand Soylent. ... It's honestly just as simple as, it's a nice-looking brand in a nice-looking bottle that draws questions. When people see Soylent, they ask about it,” he said.



Story courtesy of Chicago Tribune's Blue Sky Innovation. Find out more about the winners of RedEye's third annual Big Idea Awards at [redeyechicago.com/bigidea](http://redeyechicago.com/bigidea).



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## sports

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By Paul Sullivan | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Jon Lester and Cubs teammate Kyle Hendricks are up against the Nationals' Max Scherzer as finalists for the National League Cy Young Award with the winner being announced Wednesday evening.

Lester won the NL Pitcher of the Month Award in June and September and finished

#### STILL TO COME

Kris Bryant (.292 average, 39 home runs, 102 RBIs) is a finalist for the NL MVP award, which will be announced Thursday evening. Daniel Murphy of the Nationals (.347, 25, 104) and Cory Seager of the Dodgers (.308, 26, 72) are the other finalists.

second to Hendricks for the league ERA title. He went 19-5, leading the league with a .792 winning percentage, and struck out 197 in 202 2/3 innings.

Hendricks reported to camp without the assurance

of a starting job but wound up leading the majors in ERA and winning the Players Choice Award as Outstanding NL Pitcher. The finesse pitcher is renowned for perfectly executing the game plan for each hitter.

"His recall is unbelievable, what he does and how he goes about it," Lester said. "It's fun to watch just because he's so different from anyone else."



## Hendricks' top five regular-season moments

1. He carried a no-hitter into the ninth on Sept. 12 in St. Louis before Jeremy Hazelbaker homered leading off the inning. "If you're going to give it up, at least it's that way and not a cheap hit or something," Hendricks said. "Just left the ball up and he got it. What are you gonna do?"
2. In a 12-2 victory over the Pirates on Sept. 26 in Pittsburgh, Hendricks lowered his major-league-leading ERA to 1.99 while not walking a batter. He extended his streak of allowing three earned runs or fewer to 22 consecutive starts, a major-league best in 2016. Hendricks went 12-2 with a 1.29 ERA over his 18 outings from June 19-Sept. 26.
3. Hendricks struck out five in the first two innings and a career-high 12 over six innings in a nationally televised Sunday night victory over the Pirates on June 19 at Wrigley. He struck out center fielder Andrew McCutchen three times. Willson Contreras' home run on the first pitch in his first big-league at-bat stole the show.
4. He threw a career-high 123 pitches Aug. 1 in a shutout to beat the Marlins. It was Hendricks' third career complete game and lowered his overall ERA to 2.22, third in the NL. "This is definitely the best I've pitched, the most confident I've been," Hendricks said after scattering seven hits.
5. Hendricks allowed four runs in his final start but easily won the major-league ERA title at 2.13, finishing ahead of Lester (2.44). Hendricks became the first Cub to lead the majors in ERA since Bill Lee (2.66) in 1938 and finished with a 16-8 record.

## Lester's top five regular-season moments

1. Lester took a no-hitter into the seventh inning of a 2-1 victory over the Giants on Sept. 2 at Wrigley Field before Hunter Pence spoiled it with a two-out home run. He wound up with a three-hit complete game.
2. In a non-pitching moment, Lester laid down a perfect squeeze bunt to bring home the winning run in the 12th inning of an improbable 7-6 victory over the Mariners on July 31 at Wrigley. Lester originally swung away. "I blacked out for a minute," Lester joked afterward. "There was no thinking at all. ... I'm just happy I did what I was supposed to do and it worked out."
3. Lester was dominant in a 2-1 complete-game victory over the Dodgers on June 1 at Wrigley, allowing only four hits. His only blemish was Kike Hernandez's home run on the second pitch of the game, and he walked no one with 10 strikeouts for his 13th career complete game.
4. Two weeks after allowing eight runs in 1 1/3 innings in a loss to the Mets at Citi Field, Lester shut them down for one run on four hits over 7 2/3 innings at Wrigley, snapping the Cubs' eight-game losing streak against the Mets since the 2015 NL Championship Series.
5. Lester's issues throwing to bases are legendary, but on Aug. 22 in San Diego he caught Wil Myers taking off early between second and third and successfully picked him off.





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# (POD)CASTING CALL

FIRST-EVER CHICAGO PODCAST FESTIVAL KICKS OFF THURSDAY



By Emma Krupp | REDEYE

**W**HETHER ON THE TRAIN, AT WORK OR ANYWHERE ELSE, listening to a podcast is traditionally an experience of intimacy, a quiet period between a single person and their headphones. But Jonathan Pitts and Tyler Greene—the Chicagoans behind the first-ever Chicago Podcast Festival, which launches Thursday—intend to change that norm. Their three-day festival will feature more than 30 podcasts live onstage at five different venues, all performed in front of hundreds of would-be solitary podcast listeners: no headphones necessary.

"Everyone listens to their podcasts separately, and now suddenly [they'll be] in a room with all these other people who have the same kind of empathetic connection to the same thing that [they] love," said Pitts, creator and producer of the festival. "And then that's just gonna be a really celebratory environment."

The sentiment behind the shows is that they allow podcast fans to gather in one place and meet each other—"IRL," as the festival's website says—to connect with other members of the show's listening community.

"I think that for the community, it absolutely is a social activity," said Greene, the festival's artistic director. "When I say the community, I mean the people who make the show—the hardcore and die-hard fans."

What's more, the hosts behind the podcasts will be in the room, too: real-life faces attached to the disembodied voices listeners are so used to hearing. Some will even be around after the shows so attendees can meet them and ask questions.

"It's almost like—and I just thought of this, so I don't know if it actually applies—but I went to go see 'Kinky Boots' at Broadway in Chicago, and I had been listening to the damn soundtrack for, like, six months," Greene said. "And even though it wasn't the soundtrack cast, there was something about hearing those same songs in context and in person that was really, really special."

Pitts, who co-created the Chicago Improv Festival nearly two decades ago, said the idea for a podcast fest first came to him in the hectic days leading up to the 2015 improv festival.

"I was in the office, and all of a sudden I was just thunderstruck by this idea like, 'We should do a podcast festival,'" Pitts said. "And it struck me the same way that 20 years ago the idea of doing an improv festival struck me."

He bought the URLs for the sites that same

day and made plans to meet with Greene soon after. Right away, their partnership had an ideal chemistry for creating and curating a podcast lineup. Though each has a fairly different job—Pitts is a comedian and spends a lot of his time on the improv festival, while Greene works on podcasts such as "Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!" for WBEZ—both describe themselves as having deep interests in theater and storytelling.

"There are a lot of ways that we're artistically bilingual," Pitts said. "Improvisation and unscripted stuff is my forte. I've done enough of everything else that I know how to be able to talk in other artistic languages and disciplines. And Tyler has the exact same thing, which is exactly why I think this is a good collaboration, because there are certain areas in which our previous areas cross over, and then there are other areas where there's not crossover, but there's enough shared ideas. It makes it stronger to have that multidisciplinary artistic approach toward something like a podcast."

One of their chief concerns in curating the lineup was diversity—whether that be through media market, type of show, show size or anything in between. Though you'll see big-name shows like "Filmspotting" and "My Favorite Murder" on the headlining lineup, Greene said he deliberately avoided choosing too many programs from major podcast networks like Earwolf or Maximum Fun. That way, attendees have a chance to get exposed to lesser-known shows alongside their old favorites.

"The ease is inherent in creating a show like this, just the act of turning on a recorder and releasing audio to create a really amazing set of circumstances for people to create original work," Greene said. "I think the most important thing is that these podcasts have a really good-sounding experience ... but perhaps just

on the same page is that we do provide a diverse selection of shows for people to attend."

Although curating podcasts around a theme for each venue was a near impossibility—Greene said the lineup had to be switched up at least four to five times as shows dropped out or were added on—sometimes the programming lined up in a way that was almost serendipitous. On closing night, the podcast "Open Ended," which comes from the Postloudness network dedicated to voices of queer-identified people and people of color, will perform at The Promontory in Hyde Park. Afterwards, the new Earwolf show "The Room Where It's Happening," which centers around the musical "Hamilton," will take the stage. For Pitts and Greene, the two are naturally complementary.

"I mean, I think everyone is kind of obsessed with 'Hamilton' right now, so hopefully that will bring a new audience to 'Open Ended' in a way that I think only a live audience can do," Greene said. "You can see the show you've never heard of before, dig it and then go talk to ['Open Ended' hosts] Cher [Vincent] and James [T. Green] after the show while everybody's geeking out about 'Hamilton.' It's almost a perfect double bill in that way."

They're hoping that the marriage of different podcast communities in instances like this one will bring people together in ways they never expected. Pitts called it a "unique celebration," a chance for listeners to bask in the opportunity of seeing their most beloved shows live while also discovering new favorites.

"It feels like an honorable thing to be able to do artistically for other human beings," Pitts said.

Above all, the duo is waiting to see what the audience thinks about the way the festival is run. Their input will be instrumental in determining what it will transform into in the years to come.

"I'm really interested for the moment when Tyler and I look at each other and go, 'Oh, that's what this festival is,'" Pitts said. "Right now the perception is that the festival belongs to me and Tyler, because we're the ones that have been working on and producing it. But when all of the podcasters and all of the audience shows up, suddenly it's no longer our festival. It's theirs."

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**“**Everyone listens to their podcasts separately, and now suddenly [they'll be] in a room with all these other people who have the same kind of empathetic connection to the same thing that [they] love. And then that's just gonna be a really celebratory environment.”  
—Jonathan Pitts, creator and producer of the Chicago Podcast Festival

## CHICAGO PODCAST FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

**THURSDAY  
The Promontory**  
5311 S. Lake Park Ave. West  
7 p.m.  
» Lady to Lady  
» Bullseye! (Featuring Dwayne Kennedy, Andre Royo and musical guest Split Single)

9 p.m.  
» Black Girl In Om  
» The Book of Ye  
» Roboism

**FRIDAY  
The Promontory**  
7 p.m.  
» Nerds On Tour  
» Song Exploder

9 p.m.  
» Risk!

**The Athenaeum Theater**  
2936 N Southport Ave.  
7 p.m.  
» It's All True! (Featuring Rhymefest)  
» Improv Nerd with Jimmy Carrane (Featuring Scott Adlist)  
» Kevin McDonald's Kevin McDonald Show (Featuring Bob Saget, Scott Adlist and musical guest Fruit Bats)

10 p.m.  
» GUYS WE F@#KED LIVE!

**Schubas Tavern**  
3159 N. Southport Ave.  
7 p.m.  
» Filmspotting: SVU  
» Filmspotting

**Steppenwolf's 1700 Theater**  
1700 N. Halsted St.  
7 p.m.  
» Minority Korner  
» CinemaJaw

10 p.m.  
» Your Stories  
» Pleasure Town

**SATURDAY  
The Promontory**  
11 p.m.  
» Open Ended  
» The Room Where It's Happening

**The Athenaeum Theater**  
7 p.m.  
» Shannon Cason's Homemade Stories (Featuring Dame Wilburn)  
» Hello from the Magic Tavern (Featuring Scott Adlist)

10 p.m.  
» My Favorite Murder

**Schubas Tavern**  
7 p.m.  
» Marty & Sarah Love Wrestling  
» Arguments & Grievances

**Steppenwolf's 1700 Theater**  
2 p.m.  
» Tomefoolery (Featuring Kelsie Huff and Rachael Mason)  
» MBSing  
» Chewing

7 p.m.  
» Random Conversations with Elizabeth  
» 2nd Story

10 p.m.  
» Booth One (Featuring Charna Halpern)  
» The Next Picture Show

**The Vittum Theater**  
1012 N. Noble St.  
7 p.m.  
» Selected Shorts: Too Hot For Radio (Featuring Peter Sagal, Kirsten Vangsness, Justin Kirk, K. Todd Freeman and Carrie Coon)

9 p.m.  
» The Mortified Podcast (Featuring J.H. Palmer, Ben Tanzer and Michael A. Van Kerckhove)  
» Crybabes (Featuring special guests Susan Messing, Rick Kogan and musical guest Sunshine Boys)

Tickets  
chicagopodcastfestival.org/schedule



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"I think that for the community, it absolutely is a social activity," said Greene, the festival's artistic director. "When I say the community, I mean the people who make the show—the hardcore and die-hard fans."

What's more, the hosts behind the podcasts will be in the room, too: real-life faces attached to the disembodied voices listeners are so used to hearing. Some will even be around after the shows so attendees can meet them and ask questions.

"It's almost like—and I just thought of this, so I don't know if it actually applies—but I went to go see 'Kinky Boots' at Broadway in Chicago, and I had been listening to the damn soundtrack for, like, six months," Greene said. "And even though it wasn't the soundtrack cast, there was something about hearing those same songs in context and in person that was really, really special."

Pitts, who co-created the Chicago Improv Festival nearly two decades ago, said the idea for a podcast fest first came to him in the hectic days leading up to the 2015 improv festival.

"I was in the office, and all of a sudden I was just thunderstruck by this idea like, 'We should do a podcast festival,'" Pitts said. "And it struck me the same way that 20 years ago the idea of doing an improv festival struck me."

He bought the URLs for the sites that same

day and made plans to meet with Greene soon after. Right away, their partnership had an ideal chemistry for creating and curating a podcast lineup. Though each has a fairly different job—Pitts is a comedian and spends a lot of his time on the improv festival, while Greene works on podcasts such as "Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!" for WBEZ—both describe themselves as having deep interests in theater and storytelling.

"There are a lot of ways that we're artistically bilingual," Pitts said. "Improvisation and unscripted stuff is my forte. I've done enough of everything else that I know how to be able to talk in other artistic languages and disciplines. And Tyler has the exact same thing, which is exactly why I think this is a good collaboration, because there are certain areas in which our previous areas cross over, and then there are other areas where there's not crossover, but there's enough shared ideas. It makes it stronger to have that multidisciplinary artistic approach toward something like a podcast."

One of their chief concerns in curating the lineup was diversity—whether that be through media market, type of show, show size or anything in between. Though you'll see big-name shows like "Filmspotting" and "My Favorite Murder" on the headlining lineup, Greene said he deliberately avoided choosing too many programs from major podcast networks like Earwolf or Maximum Fun. That way, attendees have a chance to get exposed to lesser-known shows alongside their old favorites.

"The ease is inherent in creating a show like this, just the act of turning on a recorder and releasing audio to create a really amazing set of circumstances for people to create original work," Greene said. "I think the most important thing is that these podcasts have a really good-sounding experience ... but perhaps just

on the same page is that we do provide a diverse selection of shows for people to attend."

Although curating podcasts around a theme for each venue was a near impossibility—Greene said the lineup had to be switched up at least four to five times as shows dropped out or were added on—sometimes the programming lined up in a way that was almost serendipitous. On closing night, the podcast "Open Ended," which comes from the Postloudness network dedicated to voices of queer-identified people and people of color, will perform at The Promontory in Hyde Park. Afterwards, the new Earwolf show "The Room Where It's Happening," which centers around the musical "Hamilton," will take the stage. For Pitts and Greene, the two are naturally complementary.

"I mean, I think everyone is kind of obsessed with 'Hamilton' right now, so hopefully that will bring a new audience to 'Open Ended' in a way that I think only a live audience can do," Greene said. "You can see the show you've never heard of before, dig it and then go talk to ['Open Ended' hosts] Cher [Vincent] and James [T. Green] after the show while everybody's geeking out about 'Hamilton.' It's almost a perfect double bill in that way."

They're hoping that the marriage of different podcast communities in instances like this one will bring people together in ways they never expected. Pitts called it a "unique celebration," a chance for listeners to bask in the opportunity of seeing their most beloved shows live while also discovering new favorites.

"It feels like an honorable thing to be able to do artistically for other human beings," Pitts said.

Above all, the duo is waiting to see what the audience thinks about the way the festival is run. Their input will be instrumental in determining what it will transform into in the years to come.

"I'm really interested for the moment when Tyler and I look at each other and go, 'Oh, that's what this festival is,'" Pitts said. "Right now the perception is that the festival belongs to me and Tyler, because we're the ones that have been working on and producing it. But when all of the podcasters and all of the audience shows up, suddenly it's no longer our festival. It's theirs."

@EMMAKRUPP | EKRUPP@REDEYETCHICAGO.COM

**“**Everyone listens to their podcasts separately, and now suddenly [they'll be] in a room with all these other people who have the same kind of empathetic connection to the same thing that [they] love. And then that's just gonna be a really celebratory environment.”  
—Jonathan Pitts, creator and producer of the Chicago Podcast Festival

## CHICAGO PODCAST FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

**THURSDAY  
The Promontory**  
5311 S. Lake Park Ave. West  
7 p.m.  
» Lady to Lady  
» Bullseye! (Featuring Dwayne Kennedy, Andre Royo and musical guest Split Single)

9 p.m.  
» Black Girl In Om  
» The Book of Ye  
» Roboism

**FRIDAY  
The Promontory**  
7 p.m.  
» Nerds On Tour  
» Song Exploder

9 p.m.  
» Risk!

**The Athenaeum Theater**  
2936 N Southport Ave.  
7 p.m.  
» It's All True! (Featuring Rhymefest)  
» Improv Nerd with Jimmy Carrane (Featuring Scott Adlist)  
» Kevin McDonald's Kevin McDonald Show (Featuring Bob Saget, Scott Adlist and musical guest Fruit Bats)

10 p.m.  
» GUYS WE F@#KED LIVE!

**Schubas Tavern**  
3159 N. Southport Ave.  
7 p.m.  
» Filmspotting: SVU  
» Filmspotting

**Steppenwolf's 1700 Theater**  
1700 N. Halsted St.  
7 p.m.  
» Minority Korner  
» CinemaJaw

10 p.m.  
» Your Stories  
» Pleasure Town

**SATURDAY  
The Promontory**  
11 p.m.  
» Open Ended  
» The Room Where It's Happening

**The Athenaeum Theater**  
7 p.m.  
» Shannon Cason's Homemade Stories (Featuring Dame Wilburn)  
» Hello from the Magic Tavern (Featuring Scott Adlist)

10 p.m.  
» My Favorite Murder

**Schubas Tavern**  
7 p.m.  
» Marty & Sarah Love Wrestling  
» Arguments & Grievances

**Steppenwolf's 1700 Theater**  
2 p.m.  
» Tomefoolery (Featuring Kelsie Huff and Rachael Mason)  
» MBSing  
» Chewing

7 p.m.  
» Random Conversations with Elizabeth  
» 2nd Story

10 p.m.  
» Booth One (Featuring Charna Halpern)  
» The Next Picture Show

**The Vittum Theater**  
1012 N. Noble St.  
7 p.m.  
» Selected Shorts: Too Hot For Radio (Featuring Peter Sagal, Kirsten Vangsness, Justin Kirk, K. Todd Freeman and Carrie Coon)

9 p.m.  
» The Mortified Podcast (Featuring J.H. Palmer, Ben Tanzer and Michael A. Van Kerckhove)  
» Crybabes (Featuring special guests Susan Messing, Rick Kogan and musical guest Sunshine Boys)

Tickets  
chicagopodcastfestival.org/schedule



# eat&drink

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**Mixon's**  
**Smoke Show**  
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## Smoked out

LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE

### MYRON MIXON'S AWARD-WINNING BBQ FIZZLES IN CHICAGO

By Michael Nigrant | FOR REDEYE

**If Jesus smoked a perfect brisket and followed that up by walking on water,** he'd still have a lot of catching up to do to achieve the deity status of Myron Mixon. You see, Mixon is the Michael Jordan of barbecue. To be fair, Michael Jordan is more like the Myron Mixon of basketball. Jordan only won six NBA championships. Mixon has won over 200 grand championships in barbecue.

Part of Mixon's success comes from the fact that he, like Jimi Hendrix playing electric guitar with his teeth in an era when most people were still finger-picking acoustic guitars, is an iconoclast. The history of barbecue is root-

ed in a "low and slow" technique where pit-masters cook meat for hours at a low temp of about 225 degrees. Mixon certainly cooks low and slow from time to time: "That's the way it was originally done. There was no charcoal



as is manufactured today. You had to split whole wood and let it burn and wait for it to turn to ash," Mixon said. "That's how I grew up cooking, and my dad did it that way 'til the day he died. We do a cookout class called BBQ Memories where we do whole hogs like this. We go through six cords of wood." Mixon's primary M.O. at competitions and in his restaurant, though, is "hot and fast." For brisket,

he'll cook at around 300 degrees, and his meat might spend half as long on the smoker as a traditional low and slow smoked meat.

Mixon has three TV shows (he produces one and stars in two others) on the Discovery Destination America channel. He's written a New York Times best-seller. He sells a line of barbecue tools, rubs and sauces under the label Jack's Old South (named after his father) and has a line of custom smokers. When I heard he was opening a restaurant in Wrigleyville, appropriately called Myron Mixon's Smoke Show Barbe-

#### RATINGS KEY

- ★★★★ DEAD UPON ARRIVAL
- ★★★★ PROCEED WITH CAUTION
- ★★★★ GIVE IT SOME TIME
- ★★★★ TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT
- ★★★★ OFF TO A GOOD START
- ★★★★ HEATING UP
- ★★★★ ALREADY HOT



cue, it was as if Christmas came early. When I interviewed Mixon for this piece, I felt like a little kid meeting Santa Claus for the first time. Mixon has forgotten more about barbecue than I will ever learn. I could tell by the way he painstakingly described techniques and talked about “seeking perfection” that he’s fiercely competitive and intelligent.

## The food

The problem with Christmas, however, is that sometimes you’re hoping for an Xbox and your grandma gives you a pair of socks instead. Such is the case at Smoke Show. Though the restaurant was in full swing when I visited, they were out of burnt ends and jalapeno-cheddar hush puppies, two dishes I coveted. There was cupcake chicken (\$9.99 for 2), boneless chicken thighs smoked in a cupcake mold skin-side down in a moat of butter. When they emerge from the smoker, they look like thick mounds of cupcake frosting. “In competition, one of the judging categories is appearance. I got this idea to cook chicken thighs—and most guys use thighs because they have a lot of vessels and flavor—in a cupcake mold so they’d come out uniform,” Mixon said. The flesh was juicy and had a hint of smoke, but the skin was soggy and gelatinous. I asked Mixon if the skin should be like that. “In competition, the judges have to be able to bite through skin, and the way you make that happen is to either make the skin super crispy or soft with butter,” he said. “The fastest way to dry out meat is to cook the skin really crisp, and I’d rather have softer skin than dry out the meat.”

I had better luck with Mixon’s “World’s Greatest Ribs” (\$14.99 for a half slab, \$24.99 for a full). Here, the “fast and hot” technique shined. Meaty St. Louis-cut ribs from Hampshire-Duroc cross pigs had a satisfying bite and an apple and hickory perfume. The bark or crust wasn’t crackling, but it offered a firm textural contrast to the interior flesh. Still, the ribs weren’t even Chicago’s greatest, a title I reserve for Smoque BBQ’s.

Brisket (\$13.99, served, like all entrees, with coleslaw, hush puppies and white bread) was ropy and drier than Arizona in June. The crust had a nice blackened peppery finish, but the interior looked grayish, like the surface of the moon.

Sides (all \$3.49 each) were a mixed bag. Cajun corn had a slow, simmering heat but lacked salt. Loaded redskin baked potato



salad was creamy and featured bacon and scallion bits, but it too needed more salt. BBQ Georgia peach baked beans were pretty righteous. I generally loathe baked beans because they’re stuffed with cloying dollops of molasses or a silo of brown sugar, but Mixon strategically adds only a touch of sweetness and bright acidity in the form of peach bits. “We make this Brunswick stew down South with a bunch of vegetables and beans, and I didn’t want to load my beans down with brown sugar, so I got this idea to throw in some peaches.” I

asked Mixon if he made his Brunswick stew with squirrel as some old recipes call for. He blanched immediately, saying, “I ain’t eating no tree rat!” I told him some friends of mine had made it with squirrel once and it was delicious. “Well, I’ll tell you what, we got a lot of pecan trees down here on my compound,” he said. “I’ll give you all the pecan-fed squirrel you can use if you want.”

**BBQ deviled eggs** (\$7.99 for 6), featuring the trimmings of smoked brisket mixed into mayo-larded whipped egg yolk, belied their name and were downright angelic.

## The drinks

Unfortunately, like the menu, the drink list was limited. None of the signature cocktails were available, and they only had a handful of non-craft beer options including Blue Moon,

Bud, Bud Light and Heineken.

## The service and experience

Frankly, I was looking forward to The Myron Mixon cocktail, a mix of vodka, Wild Turkey Bourbon, cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, simple syrup, honey and lemon juice, but our server returned to tell us they didn’t have any simple syrup mixed up and weren’t serving cocktails as a result. Similarly, she breathlessly pushed the hush puppy basket only to return and tell us that they were out of those too. Mixon asked me if I’d told the staff about my dry brisket. I might have, but our server disappeared after dropping off our order. We had to ask a separate food runner for plates, silverware and condiments, all of which were missing from the table. Mixon acknowledged that the restaurant didn’t expect the rush they got, likely due to the Cubs World Series run, but also didn’t make any excuses. “It doesn’t matter if you have 1,000 people in line and 200 in the dining room. You gotta hit your marks and give those 200 people the best damn food they’ve ever had.”

## Bottom line

Ultimately, the barbecue here didn’t live up to the high expectations I had for it. Smoque is still the best barbecue restaurant in Chicago closely followed by Lillie’s Q, Smalls Smoke and a few others. Mixon said he plans on spending five to 12 days a month at the restaurant, with his first visit scheduled this month. “I want perfection,” he said. “We will get this right.” I have no reason to doubt Mixon; after all, he’s got over 1,800 competition trophies to back up his promises.

**MICHAEL NAGRANT IS A REDEYE CONTRIBUTOR. REPORTERS VISIT RESTAURANTS UNANNOUNCED, AND MEALS ARE PAID FOR BY REDEYE.**



LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE

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(NIGHT ONE)

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ATMOSPHERE:  
(NIGHT TWO)

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Lydia Loveless

# show up

4 CONCERTS TO CATCH THIS WEEK—AND 1 LATER THIS MONTH

By Josh Terry | REDEYE

After what seems like all of my friends called a rough week, it's awesome that the Chicago music scene has several exciting shows on the way to help lift our spirits.

@JOSHHTERRY | JTERRY@REDEYECICAGO.COM

## THURSDAY

### Hoops, Stef Chura

The Hideout

1354 W. Wabansia Ave. 773-227-4433

Hailing from Bloomington, Ind., indie rock four-piece Hoops released one of the year's best EPs with their short and sweet self-titled effort. Live, they're as energetic and engaging as local band NE-HI.

Tickets: [Ticketfly.com](http://Ticketfly.com)

## SATURDAY

### Lydia Loveless

Metro Chicago

3730 N. Clark St. 773-549-4140

While she enjoyed Joni Mitchell's "Blue" in our recent Blind Spots interview, the album didn't exactly blow her away. I know for a fact that folks seeing Loveless at Metro Chicago this Saturday will be blown away by her firebrand nature and affecting brand of country-tinged rock 'n' roll.

Tickets: [Etix.com](http://Etix.com)

## SATURDAY/SUNDAY

### Thee Oh Sees

Saturday: Thalia Hall

1807 S. Allport St. 312-526-3851

with Running and GRÜN WASSER

Sunday: The Empty Bottle

1035 N. Western Ave. 773-276-3600

with The Blind Shake and Torture Love

I've been lucky enough to see Thee Oh Sees several times at the Empty Bottle, and at each show, the John Dwyer-led garage rockers never disappoint. With a new album in their sights, the weirdly titled "An Odd Entrances" (the band's 18th), it'll be awesome to hear how the new songs sink in during a live show. Another plus about this band? Two drummers. Both shows sold out.

## NOV. 28

### Marrow, Fell Runner, V.V. Lightbody

The Empty Bottle

1035 N. Western Ave. 773-276-3600

We haven't heard much from Marrow recently, but that's because the band's co-leader Macie Stewart and drummer Matt Carroll went on an extended tour with Pitchfork-fest alums Homme (which features Sima Cunningham). Since this feature will be taking a break next week for Thanksgiving, we're including this free Empty Bottle set on Nov. 28. It's a perfect chance to catch the former RedEye cover stars as they continue to debut songs off their as-yet-unannounced follow-up to 2015's promising "The Gold Standard." V.V. Lightbody (aka Grandkids' and Santah's Vivi McConnell) opens, and I hope she plays her excellent cover of Jessica Pratt's "Back, Baby."

Tickets: [Emptybottle.com](http://Emptybottle.com)

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# REACTION

## NEW YEAR'S

### 30 EVE 31

DECEMBER 2016 DECEMBER

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

<b>FLUME</b>	<b>ZEDS DEAD</b>
<b>ANDERSON .PAAK</b> & THE FREE NATIONALS	<b>GUCCI MANE</b>
<b>DILLON FRANCIS</b>	<b>TCHAMI</b>
<b>DANNY BROWN</b>	<b>MANIC FOCUS</b>
<b>MR. CARMACK</b>	<b>BONDAX</b>
<b>NONAME</b>	<b>SMINO</b>
<b>KWEKU COLLINS</b>	<b>EMILY NICHOLS</b>
AIR SINE (ZEB0 & TEWZ) • FEE LION	MILK N COOKS • ANTICS
INJENUE • INTERMODAL	J.SQUARED • KYRAL & BANKO
REDUX • VAPOR EYES	STATIK • SMURK



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puzzles

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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8	7	9	4	3	5	2	6	1
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4	9	3	6	5	1	7	8	2
5	1	7	8	2	3	4	9	6

TUESDAY'S SOLUTIONS

S	A	V	E	S	W	A	M	P	S	H	O	W
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TODAY IN THE YEAR ...

**1776:** British troops captured Fort Washington in New York during the American Revolution.  
**1907:** Oklahoma became the 46th state of the union.  
**1959:** The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The Sound of Music" opened on Broadway.  
**1991:** Former Louisiana governor Edwin Edwards won a landslide victory in his bid to return to office, defeating State Rep. David Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader.

ACROSS

- 1 Hard work  
6 Pretense  
10 Irritates  
14 Ridiculous  
15 Hawaiian island  
16 Lunch or dinner  
17 Damp  
18 Flutter, as a bird's wings  
19 Cracker spread  
20 Outer  
22 Ashen-faced  
24 Golf ball pegs  
25 Turns into  
26 Coarse-toothed cutting blade  
29 Western book, film or TV show  
30 Wrath  
31 In \_; weeping  
33 Department store chain  
37 Price  
39 Carnival attractions  
41 Twofold  
42 Playful action  
44 Takes ten  
46 \_ boot; shoe for Phil Mahre  
47 Measuring stick  
49 Forced from power  
51 Said  
54 Wish for  
55 Dirty  
56 Survives  
60 Roll call reply  
61 Equipment  
63 "The \_ State"; Hawaii  
64 Peepers  
65 \_ like a bird; consumes little  
66 Olympics prize  
67 Cincinnati team  
68 Reddish brittle coating that forms on iron  
69 Practical joke

DOWN

- 1 Citrus fruit  
2 Strong as \_  
3 Fishing worm, for example  
4 Beginnings  
5 Withdraw, as during a battle  
6 Davenport  
7 Corridor  
8 "Caughtcha!"  
9 Elmo or Kermit  
10 Begged  
11 Kingdom  
12 TV's \_ Couric  
13 Toboggans  
21 More modern  
23 Highest cards  
25 First, second and third  
26 Costa  
27 Press clothing

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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51	52	53						54						
55						56					57	58	59	
60						61	62				63			
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

- 28 \_ control service; Orkin or Terminix  
29 Tell the waiter what you'd like  
32 Televised  
34 Vienna's nation: abbr.  
35 Leaf-gathering tool  
36 Slithered  
38 Unwearying  
40 Brown ermine  
43 Remedy  
45 Tan producer

- 48 Actor Heath  
50 Not as fresh  
51 One who helps you find a seat  
52 See eye \_; agree  
53 Fatigued  
54 Sausage  
56 Feed bag morsels  
57 Soft drink  
58 Other \_; besides  
59 Polio vaccine developer  
62 French water



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2009 FORD F-150 XL--GRAY--V6--AUTO--LOW MILES	\$14,977.00
2012 FORD FLEX LMT--WHITE--LTHR--NAVI--53698A	\$15,977.00
2014 DODGE CARAVAN SXT--RED--V6--NICE--P19863A	\$15,577.00
2014 FORD ESCAPE SE--WHITE--LOW MILES--P20070	\$16,977.00
2014 FORD ESCAPE TITANIUM--SILVER--4WD--LTHR--ROOF--NAVI--53625A	\$17,977.00
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2014 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE--WHITE--V6--4x4--53704A	\$18,977.00
2013 FORD EDGE--BLACK--AWD--LEATHER--P19958A	\$20,977.00
2014 FORD EXPLORER--BLACK--LEATHER--V6--53292A	\$20,977.00
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2015 JEEP CHEROKEE TRAIL HAWK--GRAY--LTHR--4x4--53389A	\$23,977.00
2015 NISSAN ROGUE SL--BLACK--LTHR--ROOF--NAVI--53244A	\$25,977.00
2012 GMC SIERRA SLT--BLACK--LTHR--ROOF--52018A	\$28,977.00
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2013 CHRYSLER 200 LX--BLACK--4CYL--15297A	\$9,977.00
2013 FORD FIESTA SE--SILVER--AUTO--PWR--P19661A	\$9,977.00
2010 BMW 328i xDRIVE--BLACK--LTHR--ROOF--53044A	\$10,977.00
2008 NISSAN ALTIMA SL--WHITE--LTHR--ROOF--53912A	\$10,977.00
2014 NISSAN SENTRA SV--TEAL--4CYL--AUTO--PW--XP19982	\$11,977.00
2015 FORD FOCUS SE--SILVER--POWER--XP20001	\$11,977.00
2015 DODGE DART SXT--BLACK--ALLOYS--15225A	\$12,977.00
2015 VW BEETLE CLASSIC--WHITE--LEATHER--XP20051	\$12,977.00
2015 VW JETTA SE--RED--AUTO--ALLOYS--XP19894	\$12,977.00
2015 CHEVY CRUZE 2LT--GREEN--LTHR--XP19989	\$13,577.00
2011 BUICK LACROSSE--TAN--ALLOYS--V6--15063A	\$13,977.00
2011 FORD MUSTANG--BLUE--CONV'T--AUTO--V6--15087A	\$13,977.00
2012 FORD FUSION SEL--WHITE--V6--LTHR--ROOF--15488A	\$13,977.00
2015 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 S--RED--LOADED--NICE--XP19957	\$13,977.00
2015 TOYOTA CAMRY LE--BLACK--LOADED--XP20055	\$15,977.00
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### Not again

According to Deadline, Paramount Pictures and Chernin Entertainment have acquired the rights to The Green Hornet, and they're planning a film with Gavin O'Connor ("Warrior," "The Accountant") set to direct. After a campy 1960's television show (and then a **campy Seth Rogen action-comedy**), O'Connor wants to give the Hornet—whose real name is Britt Reid—an edgy makeover. Hey, if it worked for Batman and Christopher Nolan, maybe it won't entirely suck. But don't get your hopes up.

### Sit down, Matt

While the upcoming "Ocean's Eight" is stacked with an all-female leading cast, **one pesky dude from the original "Ocean's" trilogy** will be making an appearance. According to Entertainment Weekly, Damon teased a cameo in the movie, which stars Sandra Bullock, Cate Blanchett, Anne Hathaway and a whole host of badass ladies, during an interview at the premiere for the Damon-produced "Manchester by the Sea."



YOUTUBE

That's when **"Taboo," Tom Hardy's** limited series for FX and BBC One, will debut, according to Deadline. The eight-episode series is based on a story co-created by Hardy and his father, Chips—no, seriously, his name is Chips—and follows Hardy as an adventurer who returns to Britain from Africa after his father's death. It takes place in 1814 and Hardy wears a top hat, in case you needed any more convincing to watch.

GETTY IMAGES

the quote

# "Health, happiness, LOVE—

these are the things that are at the heart of a great lady, I think. That's the kind of lady I want to be. You know, I never thought I'd say this, but isn't it time to take off the corsets? As someone who loves them, I think it's time to take them off."

—**Lady Gaga**, in an essay on womanhood for Harper's Bazaar. Gaga discusses growing up in an Italian Catholic family and her aunt Joanne, for whom her most recent album, "Joanne," is named. Keep on keepin' on, girl.



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